

# Libby must be cleaned up now

[The following is the testimony of Rep. Denny Rehberg, (R-Mont.) given last week before the United States Senate Subcommittee on Superfund Waste Control and Risk Assessment]

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide testimony before the Committee today.

Mr. Chairman, I have visited the Libby community three times within this past year to learn firsthand of the health crisis that has plagued my constituents for more than a decade. At my invitation, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman joined me for a tour of Libby, where she had the opportunity to meet with community leaders and families affected by years of asbestos contamination. Her reaction to the tragic situation was a common one: she wanted to help.



**Rep. Denny Rehberg**

With each return visit to the community, it has become increasingly clear to me that this issue

reaches far beyond asbestos, Superfund designation, cleanup, or economic loss. The situation in Libby is nothing short of a health emergency, spurred on by corporate greed, that has drastically altered the lives of good, hard working Montanians.

As we analyze the difficult lessons learned from Libby, Congress cannot lose sight of the residents and their long-term healthcare needs. As time goes by and as research continues to offer new information, we may find that the tragedy of Libby is far greater than currently understood. However, regardless of future discoveries, we must be relentless in our efforts to clean up the contaminated homes, schools and businesses and provide a more secure future for the people of Libby, Montana.

During my numerous visits to

Libby, both as their Congressman and as their Lt. Governor, I have pledged my steadfast commitment to the residents to see this through to the end. And as the cleanup is completed and the stigma associated with this town fades, it is incumbent upon the government to continue to assist the individuals whose health and quality of life have been affected by asbestos exposure.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your efforts in addressing this public health crisis. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to once and for all bring about a positive conclusion to the public health nightmare that has plagued the citizens of Libby for more than a decade and to ensure that the terrible mistakes that led to this disaster are not revisited on any another American community.

JUN 26, 02

MONTANIAN